



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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*Pat Hick*

MAR 15 2006

Commissioner Lisa P. Jackson  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
P.O. Box 402  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0402

Dear Commissioner Jackson:

I am pleased to confirm my support for discussions between our agencies to coordinate efforts on evaluating whether interim remedial measures (IRMs) can be implemented on the Lower Passaic River. As you know, before the Directive was issued, I had urged New Jersey to join the comprehensive Lower Passaic River Study being implemented by the partner agencies and to take an active role in the IRM evaluation that we had already committed to complete in Summer 2006.

As you mentioned in your March 7, 2006 letter, our respective staffs are already planning a meeting in March to share scopes of work and formulate a plan to coordinate efforts on the IRM evaluation and NJ Source Control Plan. I have directed my staff to settle on a date as early in March as is feasible to have a productive meeting.

However, I view this March meeting as just the first of a series of meetings that will need to be held to come to consensus on how we can coordinate work efforts. These coordination meetings will not produce a conclusion about the IRM action itself, because we have committed to making the IRM evaluation based on sound science and all available data, including new data from our Summer/Fall 2005 field sampling efforts. Those new data will be coming in from our laboratories in April/May 2006, after which we will need time to incorporate them into the IRM evaluation. In addition, we have also committed to making the IRM evaluation in an open forum, with opportunity for a diverse group of stakeholders to provide input. That open forum is the Remedial Options Work Group we formed, composed of agencies and various stakeholders, whose first meeting took place on February 1, 2006.

I agree that time is of the essence, so let's keep the pressure on our staffs to work out a way to coordinate the IRM evaluation with the Source Control Plan, so that we can avoid duplication of effort while moving forward together to determine whether an early action can be taken to improve the condition of the Lower Passaic River.

Sincerely,

Alan J. Steinberg  
Regional Administrator

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MAR 16 2006